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THE HISTORY Of the LEARNED Friar BACON.

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THE HISTORY OF Friar BACON.

CHAP. I.

Friar Bacon's Birth and Parentage; and by what Means he became ſo great a Scholar. The King ſends for him from Oxford to ſhew his Art; and in what a ſtrange Manner he pleaſed his Five Senſes; together with the comical Pranks he played with a Courtier ſent to fetch him.

THE famous Friar Bacon, whoſe name has ſpread through the whole world, was born in Lancaſhire; his father's name was Ralph Bacon, and his was Roger. — From his infancy he was obſerved to have a profound judgment, and a pregnant wit; and as he grew up

he was a great reader of books, and very desirous of learning; which he took so fast, that in a few years his schoolmaster could teach him no farther; and being about to send him home with commendations to his father, young Bacon fearing the worst, besought his schoolmaster to prevail with his father, if possible, that he might be sent to the University, where he had a great desire to learn the liberal arts and sciences.

His schoolmaster did not deny his request; and coming home with him, he took the old man aside, and told him, he had taught his son as far as he was able, and that he took it extreme well, and was desirous to improve it at the University; and he was really perswaded he would be but little cost to him, as he would soon become so great a proficient as must advance him to an eminent station.

The old man heard this with some indignation, but hid his anger until the schoolmaster was gone; then taking his son to task, said, How now, firrah, have not I been at cost enough already, but you are itching to put me to more? Methinks I have given you learning enough to en-

able you to be conſtable or church warden of the pariſh, and far out-do thoſe in that office, who can neither read nor write; let that ſuffice, the reſt of your buſineſs for the future muſt be to learn horſe language, and whiſtle well, that you may dexterouſly drive plow and cart, and well manage ſheep and oxen; for ſirrah, ſaid he, have I any body elſe to leave my farm to but you? and yet you take upon you, forſooth to be a ſcholar, and conſequently a gentleman, for they profeſs themſelves ſo, who lives upon the fruit of other mens labour; marry, go ye up, goodman two-ſhoes, your Great Grand Father, Grand-Father, and I, have thought it no ſcorn to dig and delve; and pray what are you better than us? — here ſirrah, take this whip and go to plow, or I ſhall ſo lace your fine ſcholarſhip, that you had better this had never been mentioned to me.

Young Bacon was much diſpleaſed and highly grieved, but durſt not reply, ſeeing his father in a paſſion. — This ſort of living ſo very little agreed with his genius, that in a ſhort time he gave him the ſlip, and going to a monaſtry, and making his deſires known to the Superior, he kindly

entertained him, and made him a brother of the ſociety of Auguſtine Friars. There he profited ſo much that in a ſhort time he was ſent to Oxford, where he ſoon grew ſo great a proficient, that his fame ſpread not only in the Univerſity, but all over England, and reached the King's ears, who taking a progreſs with his Queen and Nobles, was deſirous to ſee him. Being at a Nobleman's houſe about four miles from that city, he ſent a gentleman of his bedchamber to deſire Bacon to come to him. The Courtier delayed not his meſſage, and finding him at his ſtudy did his errand. The Friar bid him make haſte back, or he would be with his Maſter before him. At this he ſmiled, being well mounted, ſaying, Scholars and Travellers may lie by authority. Well, ſaid Friar Bacon, to convince you, I will not only be there before you, but ſhew you the cook-maid you lay with laſt. Well, ſaid the gentleman, I ſuppoſe one is as true as the other. Away he rode thinking to be at the King's quarters in a ſhort ſpace; but a great miſt aroſe, ſo that he knew not which way to ride, and miſſing the road, turned down a bye-

lane, and rode over hedge and ditch backwards and forwards till the charm was dissolved.

When the Friar came into the King's presence, he made his obeysance, and was kindly received by him. Then the King said, Worthy Bacon, having heard much of your fame, the cause of my sending was to be a spectator of some fine curiosities of your art. The Friar excused himself at first; but the king pressing it, and promising on his word that no harm should come to him, he bid all keep silence, and then waving his magic wand, there presently ensued the most melodious musick they had ever heard, which continued very ravishing half an hour. Then waving his wand, another kind of musick was heard; and as they played, a table was placed by an invisible hand, and richly covered with all the dainties that could be thought on. Then he bid the King and Queen draw near to partake of the provision, and they did after which the remainder vanished. A third time he waved, and thereupon the place was perfumed with all the sweets of Arabia. Then waving the fourth time, came

in Ruffians, Perſians, and Polanders clad with the moſt furs and richeſt ſilks in the univerſe, which he bid them feel; and then the ſtrangers all dancing after their fashion, vaniſhed.

In this Friar Bacon pleaſed their five ſenſes; ſo that the King offered him money, but he refuſed, ſaying, He muſt not take it. However, the King gave him a jewel of great value, deſiring him to keep it as a mark of his favour.—During this, the gentleman of the bed-chamber came in puffing and blowing, all bemired and dirty, his face and hands ſcratched with buſhes and briars.—The King aſked him Why he ſtayed ſo long, and how he came in that condition?—Oh! the plague, ſaid he, take Friar Bacon and all his Devils, they have led me a dance to the end of every ſingle neck; but the dog is here, I'll be revenged on him. Then he laid his hand upon his ſword; but Bacon waving his wand fixed it in the ſcabbard, that he could not draw it, ſaying, I fear not thy anger, thou hadſt beſt be quiet, leſt a worſe thing befal thee.—Then he told the King how he had given him the lye, when he told him he would be there be-

fore him.—While he was thus ſpeaking, in came the cook-maid, brought by a ſprite to the window, with a ſpit and a roaſted ſhoulder of mutton on it, being thus ſurpriſed as ſhe was taking it up.—So wiſhfully looking about her, and ſeeing the gentleman cried, Oh! my dear ſweet Knight, are you here? Pray remember your promiſed linnen and other neceſſaries for me; our pleaſure has ſwelled, and I have but two months to reckon, ſo running towards him, he turning aſide, ſhe was carried out at another window to her maſter's houſe.—This cauſed amazement and laughter, though the courtier was much aſhamed and confounded to be thus expoſed, ſtill muttering the greateſt revenge. But Friar Bacon told him, the beſt way was to put up with all, as he had verified both promiſes, and told him to have a care how he gave a ſcholar the lie for the future.

The King and Queen, highly pleaſed at their entertainment, greatly commended his art; and promiſing him their protection, took leave of him, returning to London, and he to Brazen Noſe College.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Friar Bacon puts a comical Trick on his Man Miles, who pretended Abstinence on Fast Days, concealing Victuals in his Pocket. He saves a Gentlemen who had given himself to the Devil for a Sum of Money; and so put a Trick on the old Deceiver of Mankind.

FRIAR Bacon kept a man to wait upon him, who tho' a simple, was yet a merry fellow, his name was Miles, and though his master and those of the order often fasted on fet days, Miles loved his guts too well, and though outwardly he seemed to fast for compliance, he always kept a private reserve in a corner; which Bacon knew by his art, and resolved to put a trick upon him. It so happened, on Good Friday a Fast was held, and Miles seemed very devout, for when his master bid him take a bit of bread and a cup of wine to keep him from fainting, he refused it, saying, He was a great sinner and ought to do more than this, for

his mortification, and to gain abſolution, making a great ſhew of ſanctity, and how he was inclin'd to keep the faſt. It will be well ſaid the Friar if I don't catch you tripping. Hereupon Miles went into his cell, pretending to pray, but indeed to eat a fine pudding he had concealed. But he had no ſooner put the end of it to his mouth, but it ſtuck there; he could neither eat it nor get it out. The uſe of both his hands failed, and he was taken with a ſhivering all over; ſo that thinking he ſhould die preſently, he cried out for help; whereupon Friar Bacon calling all the ſcholars together he went to ſee what was the matter, and perceiving him in this condition ſaid, Now I ſee what a penitent ſervant I had got, who pretended to be ſo very conſcientious, he would not touch a bit of bread, yet privately would he have devoured two pounds of pudding to break his faſt. ——He intreated him to diſſolve the charm and deliver him, and he would never do ſo again. No ſaid the Friar, you ſhall do pennance for this. So taking hold of the end of the pudding, he led him out to the ſcholars, ſaying, See here is a queaſy ſtomached fellow, that

would not touch a bit of bread. — When they saw him in this plight, they laughed heartily; but Friar Bacon not contented, led him to the College Gate, and fixing the end of the pudding to the bar, he left him there, with the following lines on his back:

This is Friar Bacon's man, who vow'd to fast,
But in dissembling thus was caught at last.
The pudding more religion had than he,
Though he would eat, it would not down you see,
Then of hypocrisy pray all beware,
Lest like disgrace be each dissembler's share.

Miles was basely jeered and sported by both scholars and townspeople; but after four hours penance his master released him; and he ever kept the fast, not to touch out of religion, as fear, lest a worse trick should be put upon him.

While Friar Bacon flourished in Oxford a young gentleman, by his prodigality, had run out his estate, and was much in debt; he grew exceeding pensive and melancholy, purposing to make an end of

his miſeries, and the ſcorns that were put on him by his former companions; ſo walking in his grove full of ſorrow he met, to his thoughts, an old man in good cloathing, who ſaluted him, demanding the cauſe of his melancholy. At firſt he refuſed to tell him; but he urging it, and promiſing to aſſiſt him, if he wanted any

thing, he ſaid, I am in want; I want money to buy food, pay debts, and many things more; can you help me to enough to do it? I can ſaid the old man, on one condition. What's that, ſaid the gentleman? If it be any thing tolerable I ſhall not refuſe it; for I cannot be well worſe than I am. —— Why, ſaid the other, the matters not much; you ſhall only oblige

yourself, when I have furnished you with money to do all you named, and you have paid your creditors, to become obedient to me. Now the young man taking him for a usurer, and very rich, supposed this fetch was only a device to marry his daughter, or some kinswoman of his, consented. Upon this, he bid him come next morning, where he would have the writings ready, and on signing he should have the money. So they parted, and the gentleman delayed not coming, without asking advice, and was as punctually met, but when he saw the writing was in blood, he began to start; but the man told him it was only a whim of his own to have it so, and gilting with other ments, and put his creditors mind to repay the money he had them. Upon this, and the gentleman seeing store of gold, he believed him. But said he, how shall I write with the same? O said the other, I'll prick your right vein; and so he did, whilst the gentleman found an unusual trembling and inward remorse in his mind: However taking the bloody pen in his hand, he subscribed.

Then telling all the money into a bag, he took his leave and departed; but he laughed to think how he would find him out, since he had never asked him where he lived.

Soon after he summoned his creditors, paid them to a farthing, and recovered his esteem again. But as he was looking over his writings in his closet one evening, he heard somebody rap at the door, when opening it, he saw the party whom

he had borrowed the money of, holding the writing in his hand, telling him, He was now come to demand him, and he must go with him; for to his knowledge he had paid his debts, and done what was agreed to. —— The gentleman,

wondering how he should know this so soon, denied it. Nay, replied he, deny it not; and thereupon changing into a horrible shape, struck him almost dead with fear; for he then knew it was the Devil. —— Then he said, if he did not meet him on the morrow with the money, he would come next day and tear him in pieces: And, said, if he did not prove what I say, you shall be at quiet: and so vanished in a flame of fire. — The gentleman seeing himself in this case, began to weep bitterly, and wished he had rather been contented in this sad condition, than to have taken such a desperate way to enrich himself; and was just at his wit's end.

Friar Bacon, knowing by his art what had passed, come to comfort him; and having heard the story, bid him not despair, but repent of his sins and he would contrive a way to relieve him from his obligation. He said, Meet him at the time set, and I will be near; offer to put the decision of the matter to the next that comes by, which shall be myself; and I will find an infallible way to give it on your side. Accordingly they met, and the de-

vil conſented to put it to arbitration; then Friar Bacon appearing, Lo! ſaid the gentleman here is a proper judge, this pious father ſhall determine it; and if it goes againſt me you ſhall have liberty to do as you pleaſe. — Content, ſaid the devil. —Both of them told their ſtory, and the writings were produced, with their acquittances he had taken, for the devil, con-

trary to his knowledge, had ſtolen them and the other writings belonging to his eſtate. — The Friar well weighing the matter, aſked the gentleman, Whether he had paid the devil any of the money he had borrowed of him? No, ſaid he, not a farthing. Well, then, ſaid he Mr. Devil, his debts are not paid: you are the

principal creditor; and according to the writing you can lay no claim to him, his debts are discharged.——How now? replied the devil, am I outwitted then? O Friar, thou art a crafty knave.—Hereupon he vanished in flames, raising a mighty tempest of rain, thunder, and lightening, so that they were wet to the skin before they got shelter. Then the Friar charged him never to pay the devil a farthing, whatever shape or advantage he made use of; so he should not have any power over him.—The gentleman upon this, living a temperate frugal life, grew very rich, and leaving no issue behind him, bequeathed his estate to Brazen Nose College, because Friar Bacon, a member of it had delivered him from so great and eminent danger.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Friar Bacon frames a Brazen Head.

FRIAR Bacon being now a profound proficient in the Art of Magic, and many other ſciences, contrived with one Friar Bungay, who was his pupil, to do ſomething memorable for the good of their country, and many things they caſt in mind. At laſt they remembered that England had often been harraſſed and invaded by the Normans, Saxons, Danes, and Romans, and other nations at ſeveral times, to the great effuſion of blood; and ſhould any thing be contrived to prevent this, they ſhould have a laſting monument to their immortal names.

Bacon upon this concluded to frame a Head of Braſs, and if by their art they could cauſe it to ſpeak and anſwer their demands, they would require all that the ſea girt ſhores of England and Wales be walled with braſs, and brazen towers raiſed on the frontiers of Scotland to hinder the incurſions of the hardy Scots.

They laboured to do this by art, but could not, wherefore they conjured up a ſprite, to enquire of the infernal council, Whether it might be done or not. The ſprite however was unwilling to anſwer, if Bacon had not threatened by his charms to bind him in the Red Sea, and make him the ſport of wrecking whirlwinds.

Terrified by this menace, he anſwered, That he could not tell him poſitively, but muſt enquire of Lord Lucifer, thereupon they granted him two days for an anſwer, and accordingly he returned the following: If they would watch carefully for two months, it ſhould ſpeak in that time, but the certain time ſhould not be known to them, and then if they heard it, and made their demands, what they deſired ſhould be anſwered.

At this they much rejoiced, and then watched by turns very carefully for ſix weeks, when no voice was uttered. Being at length quite tired out, and broken for want of their natural reſt, they concluded that ſome other might watch as well as them, while they refreſhed themſelves with repoſe, and call them when the Head began to ſpeak, which would be

have enough; and as this was a secret, they did not care to have it known, till they saw what they could make of it. Bacon proposed his man Miles, and Bungay approved him, so he was called, and told the nature of the Head, and what was intended by it, giving him a strict charge, as soon as ever he heard it speak to awake them.

I do that said he, master, let me alone, I warrant you I shall do your business for you effectually, never fear it. So he got a long staff to guard himself, and also a tabor and pipe, to play and keep himself awake, if any drowsiness should overtake him.

The charge being given him, and he thus accoutred, the Friars went to rest in the next room within call. Miles upon this began to pipe and sing merrily.

While this merriment passed, after a sad noise like thunder almost spent, the Head spoke distinctly these two words, TIME IS. O! O! said Miles, is this all the news you can tell me? Well, Copper-Nose, has my master taken all this pains about you, and you can speak no wiser? Do'st think I am such a fool to break his

ſweet ſlumber for this? No ſpeak wiſer, or he ſhall ſleep on. Time Is, quotha! why I know Time Is, and that you ſhall hear Goodman Kettle.

Time Is for ſome to gain,
Time Is for ſome to loſe;
Time Is for ſome to hang,
But then they cannot chuſe.

Hear you this Goodman Copper Noſe, we ſcholars know what Time Is, without thy babbling; we know when Time Is, to drink good ſack, eat weld, kiſs our hoſteſſes, and run on the ſcore; but the Time to pay them indeed Is but ſeldom.

While he continued thus merrily diſcourſing, a noiſe began like the former, and the Head ſaid, TIME WAS.—Well ſaid Miles, this blockiſh Head is the greateſt piece of nonſenſe my maſter ever troubled himſelf about. How would he have laughed had he been here, to hear it thus prattle ſo ſimply? therefore thou brazen fac'd aſs, ſpeak wiſer, or I ſhall not trouble my head to wake him. Time Was quotha! thou aſs thou; and ſo you ſhall hear; for I find my maſter has watched and tutored you to a fine purpoſe.

not with my patience: Did you hear it ſpeak, varlet? anſwer to that.

Why truly ſaid Miles, it did ſpeak; but it was very ſimply, conſidering how long you had been tutoring of it; for I could have taught a jack-daw to have ſpoke better in two days; for it only ſaid TIME IS.—Oh! villain, ſaid Bacon, hadſt thou call'd me then, all England had been walled with braſs, to my immortal fame.——Then continued Miles, about half an hour after it ſaid, TIME WAS.——O wretch, cried Bacon, my anger burns againſt thee; hadſt thou but called me then it might have done what I deſired.——Then, ſaid Miles, it ſaid TIME IS PAST, and ſo fell down with that horrible noiſe which has now awakened you, and made me, I am ſure, befoul myſelf; and ſince here is ſo much to do about TIME, I think it is Time for me to retire and clean myſelf.——Well, villain, ſaid Bacon, thou haſt loſt all our coſt and pains by thy fooliſh negligence.—Why, ſaid Miles, I thought it would not have ſtopped; but that when it began, it would have gone on, and told me ſome pretty ſtory, or commanded me

Time was when thou a Kettle,
Was wont to hold good matter;
But Bacon did thee spoil,
When he thy sides did batter.

Ay, ay, and Time was for many other things; but what of that good Mr. Brazen Face; I see my master has placed me here on a foolish account. I think I had as good go to sleep too, as stay watching here to no purpose.

While he thus scoffed and taunted, the Head spoke a third time, and said TIME IS PAST; and then with a horrible noise fell down and broke to pieces. On this ensued lamentable cries, lightening, flashes of fire, and rattling of thunder, which awakened the two Friars: In they came in great disorder, found Miles rowling on the floor in a stinking condition, almost dead with fear, and the head lying scattered in a thousand pieces about the room. Having brought him to his senses, they demanded how this came.——Nay, said Miles, the devil knows better than I, for when it fell it gave a bounce like a great cannon.—— O wretch, said Bacon, trifle

to have called you, and I would have done it; but I see the devil is a cunning sophister; for all hell could not furnish brass and tinkers enough to do the work, and therefore he has put this trick upon you, to get off from his promise.—How said Bacon, do you play the buffoon now you have done me this great injury? sirrah because that you think that the head spoke not enough to induce us to call us, you shall speak less for two months space. — And so he struck him dumb till the end of that time; and would have punished him worse, had not Burgay taken compassion on the fellow's simplicity, and perswaded him from it.

And thus ends the history of that famous Friar Bacon, who had done a deed that would have made his fame ring in all age; to come, had it not been for the simplicity of his man Miles.

FINIS.